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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the controversy over the use of Harold Rugg's textbooks in the social studies curriculum during the 1930s and 40s. The first section discusses the philosophy of social reconstruction maintaining that teachers and students should be in the forefront of social change. Rugg's major contribution to social reconstruction was a serious and sustained attempt to design a total curriculum. Section II presents Rugg's rationale for his approach, derived from the educational, social, political, economic, and aesthetic experiences he had at Teachers College, Columbia. Two of Rugg's textbooks are analyzed in section III. "Changing Civilizations in the Modern World" employs narrative style and extended quotations to stress communality and interdependence among industrialized nations. "The Conquest of America; A History of American Civilization: Economic and Social" stresses geographical factors in history and the class base of American society. Rugg's advocacy of a planned, cooperative economy and society, as exemplified in the two texts, caused his work to be labeled un-American. Section IV presents a history of the controversy over the use of Rugg's textbooks in the public schools. References are included in the document.
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SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION:

The

Controversy Over

The

Textbooks of

Harold Rugg

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Harold Rugg, professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, wrote a series of social studies textbooks during the 1930's. His goals in the books were to "..select...topics for study which (were) of proved value to all people...(,) ways of presenting these...as to make the pupil's school experience...real" (1923, p. 17) and, by the use of the materials, to prepare students to make improvements in their changing society (Rugg, 1923, p. 261). The last goal clearly places his curriculum as part of the broader social reconstruction philosophy. After being adopted widely, the textbooks became a target of attack by various "patriotic" and business groups. Shortly, the books were dropped from the schools.

The paper will deal briefly with the philosophy of social reconstructionism and Rugg's rationale for his approach. An analysis of two of the books will follow. Finally, the paper will focus on the controversy over the use of the books in the schools.

While Rugg's rationale and books contain inconsistencies and other intellectual problems, the attack did not center on these issues but on claims that he was teaching "un-Americanism." Some, such as Henry Bragdon (1963, p. 264), have claimed that the Rugg textbook controversy retarded experiments in social studies curriculum development and caused publishers to hesitate to present controversial materials. If this is true, then the elements in the Rugg textbooks controversy are important beyond the event itself.

Social reconstructionism is a philosophy of education which holds that the role of the schools is to change (and not merely reflect) American society. Mainly a response to what were seen as abuses of the business community during the Twenties and the Thirties, the movement's thrust was that schools which were ethically neutral and reflective of society were institutions worse then irrelevant--they were immoral. According to the social reconstructionists during a period in which the "American system" of business and individualism had obviously broken down, both the "child-centered" and traditional approaches to education were avoiding the major issues of the day.

A speech by George Counts at the Progressive Education Association in 1932, and his pamphlet, Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?, summed up the reconstructionist approach. Counts claimed that the public schools as they existed served the interests of only the middle class and that the crisis of the Depression made it clear that schools needed to broaden the class interests served by actively fashioning a vision of social change that would include, particularly, an increased role for the working class within the context of a planned economy. (As the Depression continued and social reconstructionism developed, some who subscribed to the philosophy would have been happy to use the term the "proletariat.")

Teachers, according to the philosophy, should no longer view themselves as the guardians of an existing culture but should be in the forefront of social change. They should work for change on two levels: first as citizens with particular skills and knowledge, and secondly as leaders within their classrooms. In the first role, an alliance with "progressive" elements in society, which in the context of the 1930's

meant the growing labor movement, was necessary. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a great overlap between social reconstruction thinkers and the early activists of the American Federation of Teachers. Later, the movement itself divided over the issue of support for the New Deal or a more radical endorsement of the "class struggle" in American life.

The second role for teachers created a number of practical difficulties. Teachers were to gear curriculum and instruction to creating in students the desire, knowledge, and skills to change American society. Further, the nature of the new society was to be a planned or "co-operative" one. A difficult issue was how to create curriculum that achieved the broadly stated objectives. In fact, Rugg was the only social reconstructionist who made a serious and sustained attempt to fashion a total curriculum to foster social change.

The idea of social reconstruction continued after the Depression--increasingly emphasizing the need for international order as well as the desirability of a planned economy, clearly a reaction to changing world problems. Theodore Brameld developed the philosophy into the post-World War II and Cold War era. His view of the goals of social reconstruction was that it is "...a radical attempt to build the widest possible consensus about the supreme aims that should govern mankind in the reconstruction of world culture" (1965). That world he saw as:

> ...a world in which the common man rules not merely in theory but in fact...a world in which the technological potentialities already clearly discernible are released for the creation of health, abundance, security for the great masses of every color, every creed, every nationality...a world in which national sovereignty is utterly subordinated to international authority. In short, it should be a world in which the dream of both ancient Christianity and modern democracy are fused with modern technology and art into a society under the control of the great majority of the people who are rightly the sovereign (p. 25).

Brameld's statement, except for the extreme emphasis on international order, could serve as the credo of the earlier reconstructionists as well.

The classroom was viewed as an arena in which to pursue the clearly delineated social objectives. Obviously, then, there was inherent in social reconstructionism a very real problem: How does one build a specified new social order through education without forcing children to accept a single view? How does one reconstruct society through schooling without indoctrination? Many of the social reconstructionists were aware of the problem and simultaneously strong in their support of academic freedom for students. They attempted to fashion a defense of their position. However, most of the defenses seem to miss the subleties of the problem.

On the crudest level, Rugg at times maintained that students were already being indoctrinated by the business culture through newspapers, radio, and family influence, and the schools, in their reconstructionist role, would simply serve as a countervailing power (1936, p. 298). While frequently reiterating his stand against coercing students to think along certain lines, he also held that in academic circles a consensus was being built about the nature of American society and that "intelligent consent" to a new order could therefore be gained by free and prolonged discussion based on data and the emerging interpretations of the society (1928, p. 298). Brameld, too, grappled with the issue of indoctrination. He maintained that academic freedom was consistent with the development of social convictions and actions. A key to social reconstructionist philosophy was the development of habits of the continuous use of critical judgments. These habits would serve as a check on indoctrination.

Finally, Brameld explicated the concept of "defensible partiality":

> What we learn is defensible insofar as the ends we support and the means we utilize are able to stand up against exposure to open, unrestricted criticism and comparison. What we learn is partial insofar as these ends and means still remain definite and positive to their democratic advocates after the defense occurs. (1965, p. 157)

While the attempts to cope with the issue of indoctrinating students in order to build a new social order exhibit understanding some of the difficulties, they fail to take account of the subleties of the problem. Such failure is illustrated by Rugg's rationale and social studies curriculum.

# # #

Harold Rugg left Dartmouth with a degree in engineering and became a student of Charles H. Judd's. In his work with Judd at the University of Chicago, Rugg was very much involved in the "science of education" movement and carried his interest and knowledge into testing for the government during World War I. When he arrived at Teachers College in 1919, Rugg's world was widened. According to his own account, both his colleagues and the artists and writers he met in Greenwich Village broadened his view of the scope of educational study to include the aesthetic dimension and more social, political, and economic concerns. (1941, p. 45)

One of his early projects at Teachers College was a study of the Child-Centered School carried out with Ann Schumaker. He saw in these schools evidence that the creative urges of man were at last catching up with his exploitative aspects, the latter having been nurtured by industrialization. On the positive side of these schools, "...(the child-centered schools') aversion to the doctrine of 'subject-matter-

set-out-to-be-learned'...(has led to) a whole-hearted commitment to the theory of self-expression" (1928, p. viii). Students, living in a "democracy of youth" and studying units of work from real life, were able to close the gap between the school and the world outside. Further, the ability of students to think for themselves and maintain their interest in "life" was developed while "traditional" schools dulled these qualities through "rote and routine."

Rugg was unable to commit himself totally to the concept of the child-centered school, however. His criticisms reveal the basis of his social reconstructionist views. According to Rugg, the emphasis on self-expression led the child-centered school "to minimize the...equally important goal of education: tolerant understanding of themselves and of the outstanding characteristics of modern civilization" (1928, p. ix). These schools did not provide for continuity of development, particularly of skills, because they relied on occasional child interest and the extreme individualism of the teachers. They ignored the results of scientific study of civilization and the use of the scientific method. Finally, "child activity (was) regarded altogether too frequently as an end in itself, rather than as a means to growth" (1927, p. 436).

Since Rugg was simultaneously enthusiastic about and critical of the child-centered schools, he developed his own rationale for public education, in which he emphasized the role of social studies in the enterprise. That emphasis on the social studies is a logical outcome of his views of society and of education. Rugg published his philosophy in a series of books and articles, written in a turgid style, which are frequently repetitive of one another.

The task of the school was, to Rugg, to "guarantee the growth of understanding tolerant attitude, powers of general and reflective thought, critical judgment and appreciation, and meaningful backgrounds of experience for social interpretation and action" (1927, p. 445-446). This task was not being carried out, he said, because "the theory and practise of the American mass school conforms closely to the mass mind of America" (1931, p. 3). What was needed, then, was "social reconstruction through educational reconstruction (1931, p. 3). Rugg's call for social reconstruction preceded the speech by Counts. However, the two men were colleagues who wrote together as early as 1927 and frequently exchanged ideas. The Counts speech can be viewed as the culmination of a series of discussions among like-minded academics.

No educational or social reconstruction could occur without an intelligent description of the forces of American society so Rugg developed one. He borrowed heavily from a group of scholars he classified as "frontier thinkers," those creating new hypotheses about social life on the edges of knowledge, particularly in history and the social sciences. Thus the influences of such people as Charles and Mary Beard, Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Peirce, and (given Rugg's bias toward the creative artist) Alfred Stieglitz and Louis Sullivan are clear.

Modern American life developed, according to Rugg, from three revolutionary movements: the development of a power-driven machine technology; the rise of the corporation with its control over money, credit, and people; and the development of political democracy based on the concept of freedom. All of these revolutions involved and enhanced the power of the middle class (1936, p. 51). As Rugg saw the American cli-

mate of opinion of the 1920's, these movements added to the individualistic influence of the frontier and increased the emphasis on rights inherent in "rugged individualism" at the expense of concepts of social duties. The climate of urban American to Rugg, as to Dewey in Individualism Old and New, was composed of the following factors:

1. An attitude of "bigness and be-damnedness."
2. An increased time beat of life.
3. An increased demand for service and efficiency.
4. A demand for immediate profits.
5. A tendency toward disintegration.
6. A "false" hierarchy of classes, in which the businessman and not the scientist or artist was at the top (1936, p. 100).

The schools reflected the climate of opinion of the society. Thus one found in public education the exploitative mind rewarded far more than the creative mind (1936, p. 158). Also, skills (although Rugg saw them as inefficiently and improperly taught) dominated the curriculum, reflecting the general trend of divorcing techniques from social utility (1936, p. 144). Finally, education existed as preparation for, rather than part of, life (1936, p. 155). Even the "science of education" movement, of which Rugg had once been part, came in for criticism. He saw it as catering to what society, represented mainly by business interests, viewed as useful at a given time, without accounting for needed changes; as emphasizing competition since a student's progress was judged in comparison with other students; and as reinforcing the over-emphasis on skills and facts (1936, p. 170). In sum, then, both society and the schools needed to be rebuilt for the greater development of humans.

The vision of a new society that Rugg held was one in which:

> ...the ingrained idea of the 'free' individual, certainly as freedom was conceived of in the simple, frontier world of earlier days, must be given up. The social structure today impinges heavily and inescapably on each individual's life. Individual and society form a single integral organic structure from which no separate individual can escape to lead a 'free' uninfluenced life (1936, p. 296).

The schools, then, must strive to build a society in which "...exploitation for immediate private profit...give(s) way to designed and controlled production for the total group (p. 222).

In order to accomplish this task, school people must ask two questions: What kind of person do we wish to create? And what curriculum helps create that person? Rugg's writings contained his answers to these questions.

The person the schools should produce would be a believer in the "Democratic Vista." He or she would understand the difficulties of democracy and be committed to a nation of socially co-operative individuals. He or she would be a man "fit to live in the modern world," possessing the skills demanded by the technology and freely using his creative powers. His or her loyalty would be to the community (1936, p. 26). He or she would see group and individual life as a whole (1931, p. 209). In short, the schools should create the "new person" for the new, planned, co-operative society.

If the educational institutions were to produce the "new person," their view of themselves had to change. Rather than being captive reflectors of contemporary culture, the schools should "...visualize... the changing community of the future and...help...direct its development...

come to regard (themselves) as conscious agencies for...social regeneration" (1931, p. 212). A new curriculum was therefore needed, based on the educational concepts that growth is evolutionary and organic, that meaning grows through cumulative reaction to experience, and that the whole organism contributes to a response. These ideas, rooted in the thoughts of John Dewey, led to a curriculum based on the answer to the question: "What meanings and attitudes must be developed to enable juvenile minds...to understand modes of living and social problems" (1936, p. 333)? A crucial part of the curriculum, then, should be problem-centered, and the problems should be those connected with the social and political environment in which the child lives. They should be "real life" problems. In order to cope with the issues, students must learn problem-solving techniques, especially the scientific (or pragmatic) method, including gathering data and choosing among options (1936, p. 305-307).

At this point, Rugg departed both from Dewey and from other philosophers of social reconstructionism. While the solution to real problems would move the students to rebuilding their society along more equitable lines, scientific method was not, to him, enough. There are, claimed Rugg, experiences which are not problems but "situations to be lived, seized, enjoyed, thrilled over." "...Scientific method has led to sound problem-solving. It has erected an adequate technology, produced an ordered, sane society. But has it produced happy individuals (1931, p. 215)? Therefore, the modes of existence of the "democratic" artist, as exemplified by Emerson and Whitman, must also be a key part of the curriculum. The child's own creative expression must be unleashed.

Boyd H. Bode pointed out that Rugg's stress on the freeing of the "inner light" was logical since Rugg saw pragmatism as essentially a rationalization of the process by which American society ended up in the predicament of the Depression. The same concern for creative inwardness that led Rugg to a vision of social reform could just as easily lead to a detachment from social issues in the call for "self-development." Finally, Bode criticized Rugg for his "hasty conclusion that creative art may be transformed into an oracle of the gods" (1931, pp. 339-340).

Bode's criticisms are well-taken. Rugg's flirtation with the arts and his somewhat hazy definition of the "democratic" artist, while intriguing, seem to lead back to the very type of education that he criticized in The Child-Centered School. It is clear, at the same time, that Rugg either was unable or unwilling to integrate the "inner light" idea into his social studies curriculum.

Rugg's rationale for his social studies curriculum flowed directly from his philosophy of education, except for the minimal role granted the creative mode of experiencing. The curriculum should be based around "the insistent and permanent problems and issues of contemporary economic, social, and political life" (1923, p. 262). Students need, then, to know what questions need to be answered so they could hold intelligent discussion of the issues. Finally, the curriculum should supply the data necessary for answering the questions and solving the problems. These data came from "episodes, narratives, descriptive, graphic, statistical, and pictorial matter which deal with current modes of living and their historical backgrounds" (1923, p. 262). As a final group of data for students to deal with in answering the basic problems, Rugg included "the fundamental generalizations which experts in various fields agree are

useful guides for the consideration of current modes of living, and of contemporary problems and issues (1923, p. 262).

With the last point, the issue of indoctrination is raised. Since even "expertly derived" generalizations are not raw data, it becomes crucial who Rugg includes as experts. Here, again, we find the "frontier" thinkers--the Beards, Thorstein Veblen, Turner, Oliver Wendell Holmes. If the basically Progressive views of these people are presented as data, how can a student logically arrive at any conclusion but that the society needs fundamental changes along certain lines? Free discusssion becomes meaningless when the only information students have exists on one side.

Taking as the basis for his own social studies curriculum the following statement, Rugg developed a total program for the schools:

> Not the learning of texts but the solving of problems is what we need. Our material must be organized around issues, problems, unanswered questions which the student recognizes as important and which he really strives to unravel. (emphasis his) (1923, p. 20)

In order to present a problem-oriented course, it was necessary to forego the traditional "disciplines" and organize a unified "social science" course. Only those aspects of each area (history, geography, civics, and economics) that were needed for an adequate understanding of the problems were to be presented to the students. Finally, the choice of problems to be dealt with was made by Rugg's own analysis of social needs and trends (the presumed purpose of his books on culture and education was to set forth this analysis) so that "each major topic of the course (was) of established social value to the rank and file of our people" (1923, p. 188).

Since involving students in unraveling the problems was crucial to Rugg and central to the curriculum, he put emphasis on the layout of the books. He saw the use of pictures, charts, maps, and graphs as important--the last three having the double benefit of both involving the students and teaching them needed skills. He also developed what he called the "dramatic episode," a narrative designed to catch the students' interest and lay the groundwork for the problem to be discussed.

Rugg and a group of colleagues developed the first set of materials in 1921. They were used at the Lincoln School, an experimental school connected with Teachers College. After a year of failure, the materials were revised. Given Rugg's desire to reform all of American education (and society!), he was not satisfied with confining his efforts to one rather small school. He therefore decided to offer the curriculum, in mimeographed form and for a fee, to public schools. In part, this decision stemmed from a shortage of funds for continuing the project. Over one hundred schools tried the materials in the mimeographed form. Using the feedback from the schools and additional research supervised by Rugg, the program was further revised and then published commercially.

There was an immediate response on the part of teachers and schools. The popularity of the series was probably more a reflection of the liveliness of the books and the shift to a "social studies," rather than separate discipline, orientation than an acceptance of Rugg's total philosophy. One indication that the response was not to the total philosophy is the widespread acceptance of the books during the more conservative Twenties, prior to the Depression and accompanying social reconstructionist mood of the nation. The first books were published

in August, 1929, and in that year 20,000 copies were sold. Sales averaged over this figure until 1938. From 1929 to 1939, 1,317,960 copies of the books were sold (Winters, 1967, pp. 493-514). The over four thousand districts in which they were used were spread across the country, including, as Howard Beale pointed out, Des Moines (Beale, 1966, p. 270).

The books themselves are not startling as textbooks, at least in contemporary context. Narrative predominates despite the "problems" approach. A close look at two of them will serve as examples of the others.

Volume Two of the series is Changing Civilizations in the Modern World, in which students (who, in the first book, examined economic life in the United States) look closely at other nations. The nations are grouped into other industrial nations and changing agricultural nations. According to the text, a student who completes the study will be able to explain:

> How it has come about that each part of the world depends upon other parts of the world, and that injury to one part affects the whole world (Rugg, 1930, p. 18).

With that objective stated to the students directly, the social reconstructionist premise of the book is clear.

The book itself makes great use of extended quotations from source material, such as one by Marco Polo (pages 42-43) and of graphs. The "dramatic episodes" come in the form of discussions among fictional characters, "trips" through a country, or facsimile newspapers. Throughout the book, judgmental words are used, e.g., "The working hours were cruelly long," (page 67).

The questions posed in the text are generally answered in the text. For example, Rugg asks "what important factors helped Great Britain become a center of world trade?" and then lists four factors (p. 102). Such a technique would seem to mitigate against the development of critical thinking skills in students. At some points, however, students are asked questions without direct answers. For example, "What do you think are the things in favor or empire building? What do you dislike about it" (p. 138)? But, contrary to other problem-solving approaches, the materials are not organized to make answering the question central. It is possible, however, based on the evidence presented earlier, to make a strong case for the positive contributions of empire-builders to their colonies, and this is an important point when analyzing the textbook controversy.

Throughout the book, two ideas are emphasized. First the commonalities among industrialized nations (summarized on p. 233), and secondly, the interdependency among nations. For example, a facsimile newspaper has the headline, "Cotton Shortage in US Hurts British Mills" (page 67).

Since Rugg was later to be accused of "un-Americanism" and pro-Communism, the section on the Russian Revolution bears looking at. The causes and the course of the Revolution are presented in an extremely factual manner. It is in his discussion of the results that Rugg lays himself open for criticism. These he sees as: the Russian people controlling their own land; the peasants restoring and improving agriculture; the availability of more goods; and the growth of cooperative organizations. Since co-operation has been developed as a necessary and

positive value, his choice of that word is crucial. While he does point out that the standard of living and wages are low, he tempers the judgment by saying "but the people have many advantages--schools, medical help, and amusements are free" (p. 368-370). Although Rugg did create a point of vulnerability in his treatment of the Russian Revolution, most of his attackers ignored the issue and concentrated on those textbooks that concerned the United States.

The third volume of the series returns to a study of the United States, The Conquest of America; A History of American Civilization: Economic and Social. In format it is like the earlier book. Two general themes recur frequently in the text--first, the importance of geographical factors in history and secondly, the class base of various groups. The importance of geography is clearly stated with regard to Puritan (pages 160-162) and Southern (page 162) patterns of settlement. Perhaps the most direct statement of class basis for power occurs in a discussion of the Puritans as middle-class. Co-operation among people is again an important focus, e.g., a section entitled "How the settlers worked and played together" (page 249), but the development of individualism on the frontier is not slighted (page 254), corresponding with Rugg's view of the development of American civilization.

It is with the rise of industrialization that Rugg's bias comes into clear focus. The Civil War is seen as a clash between the "Northern Industrial Zone" and the "Cotton Kingdom" (page 260). The concentration of capital in the corporations and its affect on the lives of workers is emphasized. The rise of Unions is virtually the only factor held responsible for improvement of workers' conditions. Further, Rugg emphasizes that "trade and government go hand in hand" (p. 471), even to the extent

that Rugg asserts that the U.S. allowed Phillippine independence in order to end competition in the sugar trade. As a result of World War I ("A Lesson in Co-operation and Government Regulation"), Rugg states that the U.S. learned "...first...that in our kind of interdependent world the people have to co-operate with one another; second...that the government may have to step in and take charge of our lives (p. 499). It is clear, then, that Rugg is preparing students for the extremely positive appraisal of the New Deal that occurs in a later chapter.

The interpretation throughout is more liberal than radical, but Rugg's books share the problem of other, non-social reconstructionist, texts--presenting interpretation on the same level as data. Since Rugg has the goal of reconstructing American life, the nature of his interpretation is important. Further, since he has a model in mind of what the new society should be like, his presentation can easily raise the problem of indoctrination. Perhaps this can be most clearly seen in the list of problems which Rugg sees as created by American industrial society. This list ends The Conquest of America. Some of the problems are:

1. finding work for everyone
2. the fragility of an interdependent society
4. the unequal distribution of wealth
6. the growth of cities and the need for city planning
13. the commercialization of cultural activities
14. the reconstruction of education to keep pace with the changing American civilization
15. the need for training for the wise use of leisure (p. 545).

While the solutions to these problems are ostensibly open-ended, allowing each student to create his own answers, the way they are stated combined with the thrust of the previously materials leads almost inevitably to the acceptance of a planned, "co-operative" economy and society, probably along the lines of an extended New Deal.

# # #

Although those who attacked the Rugg texts did focus, at least in part, on the goal of the rebuilt society, they seemed unaware of how carefully one has to read the books to follow that thrust. Further, the arguments themselves are extreme in that they cast any critical statement about American life as an attack on democracy. Thus, it is clear that the critics were less concerned about Rugg's rather mild (especially as compared to others in the movement) social reconstructionist views than they were about his departure from the traditional teaching of the discipline of history in order to inculcate simplistic patriotism.

In 1937-1938, the first major attack on the Rugg program occurred in Englewood, New Jersey. B.C. Forbes, the publisher of Forbes Weekly, a business magazine, and a columnist for the Hearst press, began, as a resident of Englewood, to put pressure on the local board of education to remove the books from the schools. He accused the series of being "un-American, socialistic, and subversive" (Time, March 3, 1941, pp. 39-40). The campaign was conducted quietly and locally, but when Forbes and his supporters lost and the books were retained, he began to

use his newspaper column to further his cause. As a result, others were alerted to the "danger," and the controversy spread.

The next round of the controversy centered on two articles, one by Augustin G. Rudd in the April, 1940, issue of Nation's Business and one by O.K. Armstrong in the September, 1940, issue of the American Legion magazine. Both accused Rugg of fostering "treason." Rudd charged that "textbooks and complete courses teaching that our economic and political institutions are decadent have been placed in more than 4,200 communities in the United States, according to the advertising claims of the publishers" (Rudd, 1940, p. 7). One problem Rudd saw was that the books replaced history, geography, and government course with the intellectually fuzzy and "un-American" approach of the social sciences. Further, teachers were supplied with guides ("which parents and children cannot examine") that reinforced the subversion of the books. Finally, they foisted onto students a revolutionary interpretation of American history wihch cast the Founding Fathers in an evil light. As support of his last contention, Rudd cited the following passage concerning the Constitution: "The manufacturers, landowners, shippers and bankers were given what they wanted..." He did not use the complete sentence, however, which concludes "...namely a government which would stabilize the money and trade, keep order within the country and defend the nation against foreign enemies" (Rugg, 1930, p. 73). Adding the last part makes the statement Beardian (and to that extent, biased) but hardly subversive! Most of the problems Rudd saw were found in the dramatic episodes, in part because they would succeed in involving student interest in the questions they raised (Rudd, p. 43). The American Legion attack, entitled "Treason in the Textbooks," closely followed the lines of Rudd's analysis, with

an additional emphasis on Rugg's position against the excesses of advertising.

A more rational criticism of Rugg's approach appeared in Commonweal magazine. Ruth Bryns, a member of the faculty of Fordham Graduate School of Education, viewed Rugg's idea of presenting historical and social realities as misguided:

> The question is not one of "whitewashing" history but a matter of child psychology and common sense. There are many things about American life--rather about life--which children and adolescents cannot be taught because their experience is limited and their intellectual and emotional development is incomplete (Byrns, 1941, p. 43).

She saw the Rugg curriculum as diverting the schools from its major task, that of training the intellect through a classical education--a criticism that could be directed at all Progressive educators and not only social reconstructionists.

The final important written attack on Rugg's books was contained in the "Robey Report" for the National Association of Manufacturers. Ralph West Robey, an assistant professor of banking at Columbia and columnist for Newsweek, was hired by the NAM to prepare a series of abstracts of secondary school social studies textbooks to be distributed to school boards. Robey's report also contained critical evaluations of many texts, but, probably because of the earlier criticisms, public interest and attack centered on the report's comments on the Rugg books. Robey maintained that the texts were too critical of America: "New Dealish in tone, they are critical of big business, cry out against unequal distribution of wealth and unequal opportunity in the United States." Instead of presentations like the Rugg textbooks, we should according to Robey, "...teach the pupils something about the principles of democracy or private enterprise before we start to tell them it is

all run by a bunch of crooks and is not good" (Time, pp. 39-40).

The published criticism led to controversies in a number of school districts that were using the Rugg texts. Some of the statements made in attack and defense of the curriculum were published. For example, in Philadelphia the Daughters of Colonial Wars argued for the removal of the books from the schools because they "...tried to give the child an unbiased viewpoint instead of teaching him real Americanism" (New Republic, 1941, p. 327). The Daughters of the American Revolution were opposed to the presentation of the idea of a co-operative commonwealth in a favorable light, and the Advertising Federation of American protested Rugg's attempt to create skepticism about advertising (Publisher's Weekly, 1940, p. 2345).

Rugg had his defenders as well. The School Book Publishers Association issued a statement on February 23, 1941, that "It is the consensus of the group that the charges made cannot be substantiated" (School and Society, March, 1941, p. 268). The National Council for the Social Studies prepared a package to aid teachers in defending their choice of the Rugg (or other) texts (School and Society, April, 1941, p. 406). Finally, academicians, clergymen, and liberal magazines defended the books both in terms of arguments for academic freedom and based on the lack of documentation in the attacks. For example, fifty-three educators and clergymen wrote to the superintendent of Los Angeles schools that his action in removing the Rugg books from the schools was "...a grave threat to educational freedom not only in Los Angeles but, because of the precedent it sets, in our country as a whole" (School and Society, May, 1941, p. 688). Philosopher George Sabine stated:

> Within this framework (of writing as a liberal and as a believer in democracy), he has treated his data fairly; he has recounted the facts, has distinguished fact from opinion, and has stated both sides of controversial issues, especially when the controversies are still living (Frontiers of Democracy, Feb. 15, 1942, p. 132).

I.L. Kandell of Teachers College ridiculed the entire controversy, saying the attackers "...must really believe that because certain textbooks are used in schools, therefore the pupils are affected by them" (Kandell, School and Society, Jan., 1941, p. 82). Both the Saturday Review of Literature and the New Republic wrote editorials in defense of the use of the Rugg books. Thus the defense tended to come from the traditionally liberal community while the attack was from traditionally more conservative groups.

The battle over the continued use of the textbooks occurred in many communities. In some (e.g., El Paso, Los Angeles, Binghamton, New York) the books were removed immediately, and in Bradnor, Ohio, they were burned. In others (e.g., Englewood, Red Bank, and Camden, New Jersey) they were retained for awhile and later quietly dropped. By the middle of the 1940's, almost no districts were using the Rugg curriculum. Thus while Rugg and his supporters won a number of immediate battles, in the end, the critics were the victors.

# # #

Harold Rugg's interpretation of the need for American society to be reconstructed was part of the broader social reconstruction movement in education. The social reconstructionists saw in the chaos of the

Depression the necessity of changing the individualistic and business orientation of American life to a planned, co-operative society. The job, they thought, could be done by placing teachers and students directly in the arena of social change. Rugg fashioned a social studies curriculum to foster these ends.

Students, through Rugg's curriculum, were to learn the method of thinking of the scientist and the mode of creation of the artist and put these to work to build the new society. His books were designed to involve the students in answering the major problems of a changing society so they would be able to create a better, co-operative life for America.

The books were widely adopted, in part because of the "social studies" approach and their liveliness. Later, however, serious controversies developed over their use. The attacks came from business and "patriotic" groups, who accused the books of being subversive and un-American. Defenders were found in the academic and liberal communities where the battle was seen as essentially one for academic freedom. Neither side, it seems, gave serious attention to the series itself nor to the problems within both Rugg's rationale and the texts, particularly the problem of subtle indoctrination. Both sides reacted more emotionally than logically. By the end of the 1940's, the "anti-Rugg" forces had achieved victory and serious attempts to translate social reconstructionism into curriculum lay dormant.

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